

"The Causes of Sedition."

I know his answer. He would tell me that (the cause lies with) the great farmeres, the grasiere, the rich butchere (butchers), the men of lawe, the marchaunte, the gentlemen, the knightes, the lordes, and I can not tel who . . . men without conscience; men utterly void of Goddes feare ; yea, men that live as though there were no God at all; men that would have all in their owne handes ; men that would leave nothing for others; men that would be alone on the earth; men that bee never satisfied. Cormeraunte, gredye guile ; yea, men that would eate up menne, women, and chylde are the causes of sedition. They take our houses over our heades, they bye our groundes out of our handes, they reyse our rentes, they leaue great (yea, unreasonable) fines, they enclose our commons. No custome, no lawe or statute can kepe them from oppressing us in such sorte, that we know not whyche way to turne us to lyve. . . . In the countrey we cannot tarye, but we must be theyr slaves and labour till our hertes brast, and then they must have all. And to go to the cities we have no hope, for there we heare that these unsaciabie beastes have all in theyr handes. Some have purchased and some taken by leases, whole alleyes, whole centres, whole rowes, yea, whole streates and lanes, so that the rentes be reysed, some double, some triple, and some fourfold to that they were wythin these xii. yeres past. Yea, there is not so much as a garden ground free from them. No remedye, therefore, we must nedes fight it out, or else be brought to the lyke slavery that the French men are in."

The testimony of the ballads of the time is as emphatic as that of the pamphlets. Take the following:—

" Envy waxeth wondrous
strong, The rich doth the
poor wrong ; God of His
mercy suffereth long The
devil his works to work. The
towns go down, the land
decays ; Of cornfields, plain
lays (leas); Great men maketh
now-a-days A sheep cot of the
Church.

" The places that we right holy
call, Ordained for Christian
burial, Of them to make an
ox's stall, These men be
wondrous wise ;